

HANDHELDS

FAQ

Q I use Skype to talk to my friends abroad, but I have to be at home and next to my PC to use the service. Is there any way I can use Skype while I'm out and about?

A If you have a Windows Mobile 5.0 PDA or smartphone, you can download the mobile version of Skype from www.skype.com. This works just like the desktop version and uses your mobile's data connection to send your phone calls over the internet.

If you want to make calls using mobile data, Skype recommends that you have a 3G data connection. However, you'll need an unlimited data contract, as standard mobile data charges still apply when using Skype. Even if you have an unlimited plan, you'll need to check with your network that you're allowed to use Skype with it.

A better idea is to use a mobile phone with wireless networking, such as T-Mobile's Vario II, and then connect to Skype at a wireless hotspot to make your calls.

Chris Finnamore

Components and handhelds expert

chris@computershopper.co.uk

SONY ERICSSON W880i

★★★★★

£10 on £27.50-per-month contract

The W880i is the latest handset in Sony Ericsson's Walkman range. Unlike the W950i, which we reviewed in *What's New, Shopper* May 2007, it's not a smartphone but rather a slim and stylish music phone.

The W880i looks great, with a black metal front and Sony Ericsson's trademark orange on the back. At just 9mm thick, it's even thinner than Motorola's RAZR V3i. Like Sony Ericsson's K800i camera phone, the W880i has a fantastic screen with a high resolution of 240x320. Text is clear and colours are vibrant.

Like the RAZR, the W880i has a slightly unusual keypad that uses thin metal strips instead of normal buttons. As the keys are so small there is plenty of room between them, so you're less likely to press the wrong key or two keys at once. Most people in the office found texting easy, but those with very large hands struggled with the buttons.

The W880i works well as a music phone. It comes with a 1GB Memory Stick Micro card and in-ear noise-blocking headphones. The headphones sounded overly bright at first, but the phone has a five-channel graphic equaliser with preset levels and a manual mode, so you can tweak the sound to your liking. There is also very little sound leakage from the headphones, so you're less likely to annoy those around you.

The Walkman application is easy to use. You can organise your music by artist, album or individual tracks and create playlists of your favourites. Getting your tunes on the phone is simple using the supplied Disc2Phone software and USB cable. You can either encode an audio CD to MP3 and



transfer it to the phone, or convert digital audio files to the phone's compatible MP3 format by dragging and dropping. The software can convert WMA and Wav files to MP3.

The W880i may not be a smartphone, but it still has some useful organiser functions. The calendar is fairly powerful. It has both monthly and weekly views, and you can synchronise your contacts and calendar with Microsoft Outlook and contacts with Outlook Express using the

supplied PC Suite software. PC Suite also makes it easy to connect to the internet through your phone, as it can use the phone's GPRS or 3G data connection to get your Windows PC online.

The main drawback to the W880i's slimness is its camera. Unlike the K800i and W810i, which we reviewed in *Labs, Shopper* February 2007, the phone's camera has a fixed lens rather than autofocus, presumably because it lacks the room. There's also no flash or LED lamp for night shots. Picture quality

is reasonable but not as good as the W810i's, and although the colours are vibrant, images appear out of focus. Call quality is also average, as callers sound muffled and slightly robotic.

Sony Ericsson's W880i is stylish and has a great screen, while the Walkman application is easy to use and the bundled headphones sound great. If you want a Walkman phone with a better camera, get the W810i; otherwise the W880i is a good buy.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Very slim
- ✓ Great music player
- ✗ Poor voice quality and camera

MUSIC PHONE Tri-band + 3G, 240x320 pixel 262,144 colour LCD, 16MB internal storage, 1GB Memory Stick Micro (M2) card, 6½ hours talk time, 18 days standby, 103x47x9mm, 71g

PART CODE W880i
SUPPLIER www.t-mobile.co.uk
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.co.uk

Also consider...

TOMTOM One Regional

★★★★★

£157 inc VAT

PRICE CUT!



TomTom's One Regional is a good-value GPS system with UK and Ireland maps.

It's easy to use, comes with a touch screen and has big icons that you can operate with your finger. Navigation is accurate and the voice prompts are clear. It's the best-value standalone GPS we've seen.



STANDALONE GPS 3½in 320x240 resolution display, integrated SiRFstar III receiver, TomTom Navigator software, Navteq UK and Ireland maps, 1GB SD card, 174g PART CODE 5N00.110
SUPPLIER www.comet.co.uk DETAILS www.tomtom.com

✓ Fast software; easy to use FULL REVIEW Mar 2007

SONY ERICSSON K800i

★★★★★

£220 inc VAT SIM-free, free to £30 on £30-per-month contract



The K800i is Sony Ericsson's first 3-megapixel camera phone. The phone's camera focuses more quickly than any camera phone we have seen and it's even possible to capture action shots with the BestPic mode. There's also a proper flash, so shots taken in darkness are properly illuminated. The photos have little noise and are fine for 6x4in prints. Apart from a wobbly keypad, the phone is easy to use. This is the best camera phone available and it's good value on contract.



MOBILE PHONE Tri-band GSM, 3G, 240x320-resolution LCD, 64MB internal memory, Memory Stick Micro slot, USB, Bluetooth, 3-megapixel camera, 47x22x105mm, 115g
PART CODE K800i SUPPLIER Vodafone/Orange/T-Mobile/O2
DETAILS www.sonyericsson.co.uk ✓ Superb camera
✗ Uses Memory Stick Micro cards FULL REVIEW Dec 2006

ACER
c530

★★★★★

£321 inc VAT

Acer's c530 has an integrated GPS receiver and preinstalled CoPilot Live 6 navigation software, so you have only one device to plug into your car's cigarette lighter and you don't need to worry about keeping a Bluetooth GPS receiver charged.

The c530 is more compact than a normal PDA and is closer in size to a smartphone. It also has a 2.8in screen rather than the usual 3½in, although it still provides the standard 240x320-pixel resolution. The screen is very bright, and text is clear as long as you turn off Windows Mobile ClearType. The huge short-cut buttons provide easy access to calendar, contacts and email, but the joystick is wobbly and imprecise.

The c530's CoPilot Live 6 software can run in either portrait or landscape mode, depending on how you've set the PDA's screen orientation in Windows Mobile's Control Panel. CoPilot's navigation software is very easy to use. To choose your destination you simply select your country, followed by the city or postcode. The c530 comes with full maps of Western Europe installed on an SD card. The software supports only the first five characters of a UK postcode, so you also have to enter a street address. The onscreen keyboard is relatively small, and while it is possible to enter addresses and text using your finger, you'll be better off using the stylus in order to avoid making spelling mistakes.



The software runs fairly quickly, but not quite as quickly as on Acer's P610 standalone GPS system. Even so, it doesn't take long to get a GPS lock and to calculate routes. The c530 took around a minute to find a GPS lock from a cold start, and less than five seconds to plot a route from central London to Edinburgh.

The CoPilot Live 6 software has several map views, which we found worked best in portrait rather than landscape mode. The standard 3D view is clear, and you can also view your travel itinerary in a list. A Driver Safety mode displays only an arrow indicating your next turn, the distance to the turn and the turn instruction, and is less distracting than an animated 3D map. We found that the software got us to where we needed to go, but was occasionally slow to update when dealing with multiple turns in a town. The

speaker is also barely loud enough when at full volume, so driving with the window open or the stereo on is difficult.

Acer's c530 will appeal only to a small group of people. It is expensive compared with a standalone GPS, but far cheaper than buying a PDA, GPS software and a Bluetooth receiver separately. If you want to be organised and navigate with a single device, it's a good choice.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good value
- ✓ Easy to use
- ✗ Loudspeaker not loud enough

GPS PDA 2.8in 240x320 LCD, integrated SiRFstar III receiver, CoPilot Live Pocket PC 6 navigation software, NAVTEQ UK and Western European maps, 802.11b/g wireless, Bluetooth, 168x108x58mm, 122g
PART CODE c530
SUPPLIER <http://uk.insight.com>
DETAILS www.acer.co.uk

CHOOSING A...
GPS Device

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

MAP COVERAGE: UK and Ireland

SCREEN SIZE: 3½in

POSTCODE SUPPORT: Five characters

TRAFFIC DATA: None

Recommended minimum in grey

1 A GPS system with the minimum specifications listed above will cost you around £175. It's a standalone GPS unit, so you get everything you need in one compact handheld unit. Its screen is not particularly big or clear to see, and it will be quite slow at calculating routes. It has UK maps only, so you won't be able to use it in other parts of the world.

If you've got an existing PDA or smartphone, you can buy the software, maps and, if needed, GPS receiver in a kit. This will convert your handheld into a GPS system with similar specifications to those listed above. The cost will be similar, too.

2 If you want to travel further afield than the UK, you'll need to get new maps. These are usually available from the manufacturer at an extra cost. When you buy the maps, make sure you've got a memory card big enough to store them, or enough memory on your PDA or smartphone.

Alternatively, you can save a bit of money by buying a GPS system with a wider choice of maps in the first place.

3 Want quicker route calculation and a better display? Buy a more expensive standalone GPS unit with a quicker processor; a 4in screen or higher with a resolution of 480x272 will give you plenty of space for detailed maps. If you're using a PDA or smartphone and it seems slow, consider upgrading to a newer model with a quicker processor and a screen with a higher resolution.

4 If you travel a lot, a GPS system with real-time traffic information is essential. The most common way to get updates is by connecting to your mobile phone and downloading the latest information. This data is charged at normal network rates, though. Some high-end standalone GPS units have a TMC chip, which receives traffic information over the FM radio network for free.

Several high-end standalone units also have integrated microphones and can be used as a hands-free phone over a Bluetooth connection. To take advantage of this you'll need a mobile phone with Bluetooth.

ARCHOS
404 Camcorder

★★★★★

£250 inc VAT

Archos's 404 Camcorder is a portable media player (PMP) with a built-in digital video camera. It plays most popular video and audio file types. The user interface can be confusing at first, but getting compatible content on to the player is easy using Windows Media Player 10 or 11. The 404 may have mediocre battery life and come without a mains charger, but it's good value.

PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYER 3½in, 320x240-pixel LCD, 30GB hard disk, plays MPEG4, H.264, MPEG2, WMV video (all up to DVD resolution), plays MP3, WMA, Protected WMA, Wav audio, 8 hours' music playback, 2½ hours' video playback, 100x78x15mm, 190g PART CODE Archos 404 CAM 30GB
SUPPLIER www.argos.co.uk DETAILS www.archos.com
✓ Comprehensive file support ✗ Mediocre battery life
FULL REVIEW May 2007

NAVICORE
Personal 2007
Multiplatform package

★★★★★

£130 inc VAT

BEST BUY Navicore Personal 2007 is a GPS navigation package for the Symbian operating system. The software mirrors the interface of whichever smartphone you install it on, so is easy to use. The navigation display and voice prompts are also clear, and there's a built-in speed camera database. It's a fast and comprehensive GPS.



GPS KIT Symbian Series 60, Series 80, UIQ compatible, Bluetooth SiRFstar III receiver, Navicore 2007 software, TeleAtlas UK and Ireland maps SUPPLIER www.mobilefun.co.uk
DETAILS www.navicoretech.com ✓ Clear display; fast software
FULL REVIEW Mar 2007